DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 104 CE 039 112

AUTHOR D'Amico, Joseph J.; Kershner, Keith M.
TITLE The Potpourri Approach: One Answer to Staff Development in the Fast Turnaround Lane.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (68th, New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Development; Disadvantaged Youth; Dropout Prevention; *Educational Development; Educational Needs; *Educational Research; *Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Materials; Learning Modules; Material Development; Needs Assessment; Postsecondary Education; *Research and Development; *Research Methodology; Research Needs; Research Projects; Research Utilization; Secondary Education; Staff Development
IDENTIFIERS High School Academies; INROADS Program

ABSTRACT

Research for Better Schools (RBS) has operated INROADS, a career development program for minority youth, for 13 years and the High School Academies, a work-study program aimed at potential high school dropouts, for 14 years. RBS found that a new approach to educational research and development was needed when working in partnership with the private sector. Using Scriven's concepts of goal and role and adding the concept of method, RBS developed a research strategy that draws from several models: qualitative and quantitative, summative and formative, analytic description and policy information. This approach, which became known as the potpourri strategy, was found to be useful not only for identifying needs but also for developing specifications meeting those needs. Research using the strategy showed that both programs needed a stronger staff development component, and specified the content of each staff development program, as well as how they should be structured and delivered to INROADS and Academies staff. With these guidelines, self-instructional modules were developed for each staff group and field tested. Both sets of modules are currently being used by INROADS and the High School Academies. RBS concluded that the potpourri approach was a valid research strategy that has intellectual integrity and validity as a research method. They found this approach particularly well suited for their research effort in support of two business/education collaborations. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED245104

TM

The Potpourri Approach: One Answer to Staff Development in the Fast Turnaround Lane

Synopsis Paper prepared for Small Roundtable Session at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April, 1984

by

Joseph J. D'Amico and Keith M. Kershner

Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123

CE036112

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M Chapman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Background

Since the fall of 1982, Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS) has been involved in assisting two educational programs based on school/industry partnerships. These programs, INROADS and the High School Academies, are designed to link students to careers.

INROADS is a 13 year old career development program for talented minority youth. Its purpose is to prepare promising minority high school and college students for corporate and community leadership positions. To do this the program provides these students with accelerated academic training, focused guidance and counseling, job placement services, and in some cases, internships at some of the country's leading corporations. INROADS operates in 16 major cities.

The High School Academies is a 14 year old work-study program aimed at potential high school dropouts. Operating as schools-within-schools, the Academies combine academic and vocational skill development with job-readiness counseling and paid employment opportunities for these high risk students. There are nine Academies in public high schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Palo Alto, California.

RBS' initial contact with both of these ventures in industry/education cooperation came when each -- independently -- requested research and development assistance.

Method

Having an almost twenty year history of educational R&D, but little experience with educational programs that involved private industry, RBS staff initially approached the research half of the request in a traditional way. Seeing the research task as one of needs identification

and assessment, RBS staff used a research strategy that included an evaluation of existing conditions using survey and interview techniques, and comprehensive reports on findings. Recommendations and future directions were to be derived by considering these reported findings. It soon became apparent that this traditional approach was not answering INROADS' or the Academies' needs, which -- as it turned out -- were a combination of policy and description needs. Moreover, the traditional approach at first adopted was frustrating the INROADS and Academies policy makers because they saw it as being slow, laborious, too technical, and not focused enough.

Interpreting this frustration with our research effort as one that perhaps characterizes managers in private industry who expect useable, concise, quickly-produced research information to guide them, we re-thought our strategy and developed one over time that we've named "potpourri."

The Potpourri Approach

Using Scriven's (1967) concepts of goal and role and adding one of our own -- method (after Cook and Reichardt, 1979) -- we developed a research strategy that draws from several models: qualitative and quantitative, summative and formative, analytic description and policy information. Retrospectively, we have reconstructed the potpourri research strategy. This reconstruction appears as illustrations 1, 2, and 3. Each illustration lists characteristics of a basic concept in terms of a continuum with anchoring labels. A check mark for each characteristic indicates which end of the continuum best describes the potpourri strategy.

Illustration 1

GOAL

	Policy Information	More	More	Analytic Description
1.	internal perspective		x	external perspective
2.	ordinary knowledge	x		scientific knowledge
3.	changes program	x	x	describes program
4.	produces recommendations	x		produces input for recommendations
5.	targeted on user needs	x		focused by scientific method
6.	varying depth of inquiry		x	uniform depth of inquiry
7.	practical and concise	x		technical and comprehensive
8.	interacts with political considerations	x	x	informs political considerations
9.	instrumental	x		conceptual
10.	action oriented	x		analysis oriented

Illustration 2

ROLE

	Formative	More	More	Summative
1.	developmental	x		judgemental
2.	seeks problems		x	seeks answers
3.	descriptive	x		predictive
4.	interdependence with program staff	x	x	independent of program program staff
5.	process oriented	x	x	outcome oriented
6.	more feedback reporting	x		less feedback reporting
7.	focus on manipulable variables		x	focus on measurable variables
8.	internal audience	x	x	external audience
9.	case specific		x	generalized
10.	quick results	x		cummulative results

Illustration 3

METHOD

	Qualitative	More	More	Quantitative
1.	design evolves	x		design preset
2.	seeks to understand phenomena		x	seeks cause and effect relationships
3.	naturalistic and less controlled measurement		x	obtrusive and highly controlled measurement
4.	more subjective	x		more objective
5.	process oriented		x	outcome oriented
6.	less generalizable		x	more generalizable
7.	assumes dynamic reality	x		assumes stable reality
8.	diverse methods	x		limited field work
9.	intensive field work	x		limited field work
10.	pragmatic analyses	x		technical analyses

Results

The information that resulted from this potpourri strategy turned out to be useful not only for identifying needs but also for developing specifications meeting those needs. The findings indicated that both programs needed a stronger staff development component. They also provided guidelines as to what the content of staff development should be for each program, and even some hints as to how staff development should be structured and delivered to INROADS and Academies staff.

For INROADS, the potpourri research approach revealed a need for staff development packaged as a set of self-instructional modules for site coordinators in the following areas:

- staff selection and management
- team building and management
- goal setting
- curriculum and course development
- networking
- resource identification and utilization

For the Academies, the potpourri approach pinpointed similar staff development needs -- that is, as self-instructional modules for site managers -- but in different content areas:

- team planning and goal setting
- course and curriculum design
- career development
- counseling
- working with business and industry

Both the INROADS and Academies modules were reviewed by program staff and field tested. In the case of the Academies modules there were, in

fact, three separate field tests -- two in Philadelphia and one in Palo Alto. Both sets of modules were fine-tuned and polished as a result of these tests. And both are currently being used by INROADS and the High School Academies.

Conclusion

In the past couple of years, a considerable amount of rhetoric and often public policy has focused on the need to establish partnerships between education and private industry. As more of these partnerships crop up, there will probably be increased calls for research and development efforts to support them. Our experiences with INROADS and the High School Academies cause us to conclude that the private sector involvement in the partnership has a fairly dramatic influence on the conduct of research and development in these situations. In short, the demands of the private sector for quick, concise, practical, useable information create an environment in which traditional research and development strategies will not work. Staff at RBS made this discovery the hard way -- through trial and error -- yet fortunately we were able to adjust our approach and succeed to everyone's satisfaction.

In reconstructing our experience, we now see that our approach -- the potpourri approach -- was derived from a mixture of practical constructs that we can now group under the three concepts: Goal, Role, and Method. We found that the potpourri approach was a useful tool and one that has intellectual integrity and validity as a research approach. For us it was more effective than a singular approach. And we found it particularly well suited for our research effort in support of two business/education collaborations.

References

Baker, Eva L. Evaluation dimensions for program development and improvement. In Scarira B. Anderson and Claire D. Coles (Eds.). New Direction for Program Evaluation, Exploring Purposes and Dimensions, 1978, Number 1, 59-72.

Baker, Eva. L. Formative evaluation of instruction. In W. James Popham (Ed.) Evaluation in Education. Berkely, CA: McCutchan, 1974.

Corwin, Ronald G. The role of qualitative methods in evaluation. In Roy A Edelfelt (Ed.). Staff development for school improvement: An Illustration.

D'Amico, Joseph J., Kershner Keith M., Neubauer, Antonia R. with Biester, Tom. Preparing teachers to work with business and industry: The Philadelphia Academies teacher training program. Journal of Staff Development, forthcoming.

Firestone, William A. & Dawson, Judith A. Approaches to qualitative data anaylsis: Intuitive, procedural, and intersubjective. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, 1982.

Leviton, Laura C. & Hughes, Edward, F. Y. Research on the utilization of evaluations: A review and synthesis. Evaluation Review, 1981, 5(4) 525-548.

Lindbloom, Charles E. & Cohen, David K. Useable Knowledge. New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1979.

Reichardt, Charles S. & Cook, Thomas S. Beyond qualitative versus quantitative methods. In Thomas D. Cook & Charles Reichardt (Eds.). Qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation research. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications, 1979.

Scriven, Michael. The methodology of evaluation. In AERA Monograph Series Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1967.

Smith, Nick L. & Caulley, Darrel N. The interaction of evaluation and policy: Case reports from state education agencies. Portland, OR.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1982.

Weiss, Carol H. Using social research in public policy making. Lexington, MA.: D. C. Heath & Co., 1977.

Weiss, Carol H. & Bucuvalas, Michael J. Social science research and decision making. New York: Columbia University Press.